

## Attachment A-1

### Alternative Assessment Design for Arts and Humanities and Practical Living/Vocational Studies

Kentucky's Learning Goals and Academic Expectations continue to be the centerpiece in defining what students should know and be able to do as a result of their school experience.

Goal 2 states:

All Kentucky schools shall develop their students' ability to **apply core concepts and principles** from mathematics, the sciences, the arts, the humanities, social studies, practical living studies, and vocational studies to what they will encounter throughout their lives.

In order to fully understand the learning goals for Arts and Humanities, and Practical Living and Vocational Studies and the limitations of the current assessment design, it is necessary to return to the expectations for learning as defined in Goal 2.

#### **Arts and Humanities\***

- 2.22 Students create works of art and make presentations to convey a point of view.
- 2.23 Students analyze their own and others' artistic products and performances using accepted standards.
- 2.24 Students have knowledge of major works of art, music, and literature and appreciate creativity and the contributions of the arts and humanities.
- 2.25 In the products they make and the performances they present, students show that they understand how time, place, and society influence the arts and humanities such as languages, literature, and history.
- 2.26 Through the arts and humanities, students recognize that although people are different, they share some common experiences and attitudes.
- 2.27 Students recognize and understand the similarities and differences among languages.
- 2.28 Students understand and communicate in a second language.

*\*Note: Of the seven academic expectations outlined above, only two expectations 2.23, 2.24. are appropriate for the current CATS assessment design.*

#### **Practical Living\***

- 2.29 Students demonstrate skills that promote individual well-being and healthy family relationships.
- 2.30 Students evaluate consumer products and services and make effective consumer decisions.
- 2.31 Students demonstrate the knowledge and skills they need to remain physically healthy and to accept responsibility for their own physical well-being.
- 2.32 Students demonstrate strategies for becoming and remaining mentally and emotionally healthy.

- 2.33 Students demonstrate the skills to evaluate and use services and resources available in their community.
- 2.34 Students perform physical movement skills effectively in a variety of settings.
- 2.35 Students demonstrate knowledge and skills that promote physical activity and involvement in physical activity throughout lives.

*\* Note: Of the seven academic expectations outlined above, most of the CATS assessment items are limited to “knowledge about” rather than demonstrated skills or abilities.*

### **Vocational Studies\***

- 2.36 Students use strategies for choosing and preparing for a career.
- 2.37 Students demonstrate skills and work habits that lead to success in future schooling and work.
- 2.38 Students demonstrate skills such as interviewing, writing resumes, and completing applications that are needed to be accepted into college or other postsecondary training or to get a job.

*\*Note: Of the three academic expectations outlined above, items on the CATS assessment are limited to “knowledge about” rather than demonstrated skills and abilities.*

Although Arts and Humanities and Practical Living/Vocational Studies assessment scores have shown continuing improvement, they consistently remain among the lowest accountability scores in the state. While only a few schools have reached proficiency in these content areas, critical gains have been made in defining the core content and essential understandings, focusing instruction around the core content, designing quality professional development, and developing instructional tools for the classroom (i.e., Arts Toolkits for Drama and Dance). Schools that have demonstrated success in these disciplines most often focus on integration of the content across the curriculum, engaging students in learning opportunities that allow them to create, perform, explore, and apply knowledge to areas of individual interest.

Four of the arts disciplines (music, dance, drama/theatre, and visual arts) and four of the practical living/vocational studies disciplines (vocational studies, health, physical education, and consumerism) are assessed at 5<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades through a matrix sampling process. Questions in each of the constructs are spread across twelve test forms to assure the core content coverage through school-level accountability thus providing very limited subscore reporting to individual students. In each of the content areas, for example, there are eight multiple-choice and two open-response questions on each individual test form, and those questions are further divided into subdomains. The current assessment design is limited in assessing broad domains (e.g., fitness and physical education, career preparation, or the knowledge and skills necessary to make the transition from high school to postsecondary education or the workplace). The on-demand form of the current assessment design will always miss many valued aspects in these domains that are characterized by “doing.”

Alternative assessment and accountability designs need to be explored for both arts and humanities and practical living/vocational studies that might include performance-based

assessments such as district, regional, or state adjudicated events; expansion of occupational or workplace assessments such as the Kentucky Occupational Skills Standards Assessment (KOSSA); or increased accountability for individual fitness plans and individual graduation plans.

One example of a possible alternative assessment for practical living core content 2.29, 2.31, 2.32, 2.34, and 2.35, is reflected in the following **wellness plan** developed by Dr. Steve Frommeyer, Principal; Belinda Stivers, School Nurse; and David Baird, Superintendent, for Eminence Middle and High School, Eminence Independent School District.

- 10,000-Step Program - Kickoff to the year. Students use pedometers (sponsored by a business in the community) to chart how many steps they take each day. Goal for fitness is 10,000 or more.
- Fitness Report Card – Students are sent home with a fitness report card along with their academic report card each grading period. The categories are from the President’s Fitness Program.
- Fitness Plans – Students in their practical living/health classes develop personalized fitness plans.
- Fitness goals – Some students set personalized fitness goals in the Individual Graduation Plans.
- Assemblies - Assemblies on selected topics, such as Internet safety, drugs and alcohol, backpack safety, etc., occur throughout the year.
- Principal Talks – Principal visits classrooms to discuss leadership, teamwork, and respect.
- Parent Education – Quarterly parent meetings in “becoming and remaining mentally and emotionally healthy are conducted.”
- Wellness Committee – Quarterly meetings occur to discuss identified needs and develop future activities to address concerns.
- At-Risk Committee – Meetings occur monthly with entire staff to coordinate all services available to at-risk students and families.

Assessments in vocational studies could be accomplished at the high school level through end-of-course assessments, or through Kentucky Occupational Skills Standards Assessments (KOSSA) at the end of a three-course career pathway study. KOSSA is currently used in high schools throughout Kentucky as a tool for defining what a student must know and be able to do in order to succeed in today’s workplace. This assessment was developed to ensure that the students of the Commonwealth have acquired the skills necessary to support the increasing demands of high performance organizations based on standards identified by employers across the state. Skills standards are in place for the following career pathways:

- Agriculture
- Business and Marketing
- Health Science
- Human Services
- Technology Education
- Communications

- Construction
- Transportation
- Manufacturing

Likewise, arts educators in Kentucky have expressed concerns that the CATS assessment does not address creating and performing, characterizing these learning opportunities as “the most critical processes in learning the art forms.”

In December 2004 the Arts Task Force Advisory Group outlined recommendations calling for increased accountability to “provide grounding in the arts” to include instruction in all four art forms. They acknowledged that “the current assessment design addresses only student ability to respond to the arts, and that some unintended consequences of this limited assessment have caused some schools to move away from ‘doing’ the arts toward ‘learning about’ the arts.”

At the March 29 LSAC meeting, Superintendent Lonnie Anderson in Whitley County reported that a once thriving band of 60 to 70 students at Whitley County High School had gradually dwindled to 45 students five years ago down to the current registration of only 7 students.

While the Arts Task Force continues to explore alternative methods of assessment, some possible considerations may be:

- District, regional or statewide adjudicated events in choral music, band and orchestra such as the Kentucky Music Educators Association (KMEA) Festival.
- Art fairs or portfolios adjudicated at the local level.
- Drama events adjudicated at the local level.
- Performance-based assessments.
- End-of-course assessments developed at the state with administration and scoring at the local level.
- State monitoring of programs and learning opportunities offered.

Additional time is needed to design more effective ways to assess these very important core content domains.

#### Policy issues:

How should Arts and Humanities and Practical Living/Vocational Studies be assessed?

Should KDE initiate pilot studies to develop and/or identify assessment approaches in Arts and Humanities and Practical Living/Vocational Studies that will address what students do as well as what they know in these areas?

What should be done in assessment and accountability during the transition time of the current RFP?

Staff recommendation:

Staff recommends continuing the current method of assessing Arts and Humanities and Practical Living/Vocational Studies while concurrently conducting a pilot study in a selected number of school districts to determine the large-scale viability of an assessment accomplished in ways other than through the current matrix-sampled, on-demand design.

